

A STUDY ON SELECTED FOLK ART FORMS WITH RESPECT TO INDIAN FASHION

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Abstract: The Aim for conducting this research is to study how the fashion industry has adapted the various Indian Folk Art traditions and the consumer behaviour towards it. This vast area of cultured art is being divided into states, communities above 600, districts, dialects, tribes which are the main reasons to this rich diversity in art forms. Though these art traditions are a lot in number, many of them are in an extinct stage and few don't exist. Each form has its own aesthetics and elegance. There are very few people who have the concern towards the art forms, and they come up with great plans amongst which quite a few are breathtaking. This study focuses on the development of these art forms and their impact on the fashion industry.

Keywords: Indian Arts, Culture, Tradition, Fashion Industry, Consumer Behaviour.

I. BACKGROUND

Indian art lives from about the 3rd millennium BCE to the modern times. A strong sense of design is art, from then till now. People, in India are not aware of most of the art forms as they are too vast. This vast area of cultured art is being divided into states, communities above 600, districts, dialects, tribes which are the main reasons to this rich diversity in art forms. Though these art traditions are a lot in number, many of them are in an extinct stage and few don't exist. Each form has its own aesthetics and elegance. There are very few people who have the concern towards the art forms, and they come up with great plans amongst which quite a few are breathtaking. This study focuses on the development of these art forms and their impact on the fashion industry. Fashion, as mentioned earlier has played a major role in not only bringing the art to limelight but also has ultimately made the art live. Following examples would speak about few of the many traditional folk art forms of India, their growth, development, and their contemporary life and how are they being manipulated by the fashion industry, with its originality in place.

II. PROBLEM DEFINITION

Most of our Folk Art traditions are at its urge of becoming extinct. But still, there are resources to help them out. Fashion is a major platform that has given folk art its due recognition through its creativity yet retaining its originality. The reason for conducting this research is to study how the fashion industry has adapted the various Indian Folk Art traditions and the consumer behaviour towards it.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the impact of Indian folk art in contemporary fashion.
- To study consumer acceptance in the Indian market.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Four well known traditional folk art forms are taken and are being researched on the basis of history, development of the art, its contemporary status and also about the designers of the fashion field – their implementation of the art forms in their collections as their contribution towards the art. Data collections have been made which are from reliable sources. Data's can be categorised into two forms.

Primary Data

Data has been collected from people through direct conversation, using in-depth interviews as a tool for data collection. Quantitative data was collected using a survey on seventy respondents.

Secondary Data

Data have been collected from internet sources, articles, newspapers (The Hindu, Times of India), news websites (Fiber2Fashion), individual websites and reviews from social networking sites such as facebook and twitter.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

Warli entering the fashion field was a revelation to the art itself. Designers were inspired by the simplicity of the art and have tried to implement them into today's fashion. Everything about Warli is earthy and soothing. They have the aptitude to create the nostalgia. They can make u feel the smell of the wet soil. These even today succeed in adding elegance to a rural hut or a five star hotel interior with the same charm. Today one can see the art as a wall hanging, as home decor, as a garment, as a toy and still more. Designers and inspirers have paved a dynamic path for the art and as a result today the art is seen in varied form from a house to an element of decor.

Smriti Gupta, a pass out from the National Institute of Design, India and having experience of working under some of the biggest names in Fashion and textile industry, (Smritistudio portfolio, 2007) began her career as a designer and stylist with Ritu Kumar one of the pioneers of Indian Fashion Industry, conniving a range of hand embroidered denim garments which were taken to the ramp of Lakme India Fashion Week 2003 under the Ritu Kumar label. She has also worked with Fabindia as a textile designer. Smriti always had a keen interest towards the craft and handloom industry of India, which gave her a chance to explore one of the well known traditional art forms of India.

Later she was practising privately and today she is one of the top upcoming young designers of India. When Smriti decided to take up traditional art forms as an inspiration as one of her collections, she came across Warli and its incredible features. No wonder, the designer was so enthralled by this art form, that she decided to create an entire line of dresses based on Warli paintings. She has used extremely traditional patterns, rich and folksy colours to recreate the magic of Warli paintings in her dresses.

Today, many designers are inspired by charm of our traditional folk art style. Methods like tie-n-dye; block prints are few of the lot which makes Indian fashion across the world. Shruti Kothari (anti-fits) tells us about the way you ride on this trend using the famous Warli paintings.

Warli wonders, as she mentions, from a remote village are no more a remote tradition. To her, the simple motif of stick figures on a structured tunic adds just that element missing. A black skirt with white sticks on it is shockingly seen on western wear and not on Indian wear. This season's new release would be anti-fits, a rebellious trend defying the norms of regular fashion. These outfits were ideal for Indian women because it covers all the parts of the body. These outfits had Warli prints on them giving an exotic Indian appeal.

P N Gadgil jewellers from Pune have come out with unique Warli designs (label posts, april 24, 2013). The Warli collection range is from 3gms to 50gms which has Warli Pendants, Necklace, and Bracelets & Bangles.

A celebrated fashion designer Neetu Lulla reinvents Kanjeevaram and Kalamkari by giving it a contemporary look. The designer goes back to her roots and her entire focus is on reinventing the tradition by giving it a chic look. Paying tribute to both the traditions form Kanjeevaram and srikalahasti, she gets down taking the tradition onto the ramp. Kanjeevaram sari is celebrated in the entire south India so much so that women wear it for every occasion and it is always held on for prosperity thereby making it one of the most cherished fabrics ever. Traditionally, Kanjeevaram is very thick because of

the weave and the zari used. But over the decades we very well know that the weight is becoming less. Today the sari is combined with uparas to give it a soft and sensual feel without losing its appeal. With the Kalamkari collection, Neeta Lulla pays patronage to an Indian art that needs no introduction. The collection brings out the marriage of Kalamkari's rich inspirations of renaissance with a modern take to overall group.

One of India's foremost designer as mentioned, Ritu Kumar has developed a unique style of her own, reflecting the Indian tradition of craftsmanship on a contemporary scale. Since she had an art history and musicology background, her understanding of ancient designs and incorporating them into the contemporary world has created a new classicism. She holds between traditionalism and modernity. Her works today has reached a level beyond revival, where it is constantly evolving within the tradition that is sophisticated both in the eastern and western sense, with each of her collections making a contemporary statement. Around 1994 Ritu karabagh, a collection of traditional and modern leather accessories following which she also paid tribute to the eternal vines of the cholamandal coast and paisley, which were popularised in the painted and printed form of Kalamkari which was the starting point for this collection. Thus the creation of printed or painted leather bags, coats, etc with embroider patterns came up, adding additional embellishments to the design. This was finally made to flow on the runway, "Ritu Kumar's fashion show at the HDIL India couture week".

In many aspects, block printing using wooden blocks in India, has changed very little till date (contemporary block printing, 2012). Craftsmen sourced seasonal teakwood and used special techniques and steel chisels to carve intricate designs into the wood to create the block. This is then soaked in olive or mustard oil for several days to soften the wood and prevent it from becoming warped. Although the methods of producing and carving wooden stamps have remained the same over the period of textile history, Colouricious has developed the industry by adapting their own designs to modern demands. While ethnic designs, such as paisley patterns, are still widely available, they have expanded traditional ranges to include more contemporary designs, such as art nouveau and art deco blocks. This provides exciting variation in the different conceptual possibilities available using just a simple wooden block and some paint. Though traditionally craftsmen used natural vegetable dyes to print onto fabrics there is now an astonishing variety of fabric paints which can be used by the creative textile artist to print their own fabric using wooden stamps. The simplicity of this ancient and highly simple technique can be adapted and updated by craft goods which are widely available.

Each region has its traditional distinct design elements with unique colour schemes and motifs. There are many fashion designers who have taken the block printing as their major lead and have succeeded in the fashion industry.

Her career from a tiny village in Bengal at a time when fashion was an unfamiliar word in the Indian context, Ritu Kumar, paved the way for Indian designers, both in India and abroad. Late 1990s there was a fashion explosion in India, with new designers launching their lines every other day. While some chose to look at the West for inspiration, others were drawn towards our culture.

When she started, being in fashion was a huge challenge. She could not import a zip or a button or even a piece of elastic as the market was completely closed. Western influences were hence made opaque and hence we were forced to go back to our roots.

Initially, there was no sense of what constituted Indian fashion or what should constitute. Even in Bengal, one can see men wearing a dhoti with a waistcoat or tie. It was a complete potpourri and street fashion as a there was no concept or reason behind it. I was drawn to what was original in our culture because Ritu believed in the richness of Indian textiles. But the initial results were far from encouragement. People thought that block printed designs looked like bed covers and they were perhaps right. Over a period of time Ritu's aesthetics were given a chance.

Data Collection: Indepth interviews were conducted with experts from prominent academic institutes and the findings have been summarized in the table as given below

| PERSONALS INTERVIEWED | INTERVIEW INFORMATION |
|---|---|
| Name: Dr.Ashrafi Bagat Age: 60 Qualification: P.H.D. (Art historian, Art critic) Occupation: Former head of Fine Arts Department- Stella Maris College (Chennai) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present status of our folk art traditions are quiet exploited, explored, and experimented. • The main language of the folk art has not changed much. • It looks like taking it directly and not manipulating enough to make it contemporary. • People are always looking out for something |

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| | <p>new and different.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the designers can carry it a little further and push the language of the folk art traditions that will have a huge market. • It is still on the runway having different directions on the same plane. It has to take off. |
| <p>Name: Mr.Vishal Gupta Occupation: Associate professor (NIFT) Gandhinagar</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One can name it as traditional activity, a religious or a cultural activity. • There is a constant demand. The arts which have a mass appeal survive and the one's which doesn't, it's the other way round. • The arts which don't have a context don't survive. • The art has to be transformed for the art to live alive. Change is always needed. |
| <p>Name: Dr.LakshmiPriya Daniel Age: 45 Occupation: Associate Professor, Fine Arts Department, Stella Maris College (Chennai) Qualification: P.H.D, Art historian</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been revised and it is being used well enough through design interventions. • Many of them do use it as a source of inspiration. The combination of these inspirations and making a design of their own is what is happening today and nothing much. • Fashion has definitely given these art forms an edge. • Today people are more inclined towards simplicity, elegance and minimalism. It is actually the right time to bring in a difference. |

For a quantitative research, the respondents are categorised into 4 distinct categories. The sample size is 70.

- Random consumers – category 1
- Consumers who are concerned about fashion – category 2
- Consumers who have a background in the field – category 3
- Consumers who are well versed in the field – category 4

Though all of them are considered as common consumers, the way each category people react towards this topic was different. Hence, the analysis was even more précised and ideal.

Sample size = 70

Confidence Level = 95%

Confidence Interval = 11.7

Population = Infinite

TABLE 1 (Rank given out of 10)

| TOPICS | Category 1 | Category 2 | Category 3 | Category 4 |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| No. Of traditional art forms known | all known - 3 less than 3 known - 7 | all known - 6 less than 3 known - 4 | all known - 7 less than 3 known - 3 | all known - 10 less than 3 known - 0 |
| How do you look at these art forms? | as a tradition- 9 as a key to fashion - 1 | as a tradition- 8 as a key to fashion - 2 | as a tradition- 7 as a key to fashion - 3 | as a tradition- 8 as a key to fashion - 2 |
| Interpretation of | Yes – 6 | Yes – 6 | Yes – 5 | Yes – 2 |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| the art forms, does it help or spoil? | No – 1 Sometimes - 2 | No – 1 Sometimes -2 | No – 1 Sometimes - 4 | No – 0 Sometimes - 8 |
| Traditional and modern | Agree – 9 Disagree - 1 | Agree – 9 Disagree - 1 | Agree – 7 Disagree - 3 | Agree – 9 Disagree - 1 |
| How does traditional art attract you? | Anyone – 8 All three - 2 | Anyone – 6 All three - 4 | Anyone – 7 All three - 3 | Anyone – 8 All three - 2 |
| Fashion to bring art to higher platforms. | Agree – 8 Disagree - 0 | Agree – 10 Disagree - 0 | Agree – 9 Disagree - 1 | Agree – 10 Disagree - 0 |
| Traditional art with cotton or silk. | Cotton – 7 Silk - 3 | Cotton – 4 Silk - 6 | Cotton – 6 Silk - 4 | Cotton – 8 Silk - 2 |
| Acceptance of interpretation of designers | Agree – 9 Disagree – 0 To a certain extent - 1 | Agree – 10 Disagree – 0 To a certain extent - 0 | Agree – 3 Disagree – 0 To a certain extent - 7 | Agree – 4 Disagree – 0 To a certain extent - 6 |
| Acceptance of modern interpretations as a substitute. | Agree – 8 Disagree - 2 | Agree – 8 Disagree - 2 | Agree – 5 Disagree - 5 | Agree – 2 Disagree - 8 |
| Traditional forms in preferred attire | Ethnic – 6 Modern - 4 | Ethnic – 7 Modern - 3 | Ethnic – 6 Modern - 4 | Ethnic – 8 Modern - 2 |

VI. CONCLUSION

To make the consumer accept truth and satisfy them with something that does not belong to this era is no joke. Consumers are the ones who will not easily get satisfied in terms of fashion. They are very strong on their tastes and preferences. Keeping this in mind, the designers maintain a thin line connecting both the eras, and not overdoing either of them. This was one of the major reasons as to why consumers are willing to accept the difference created in the traditional art. The art can connect all the time periods. It also proves a point that even a 3000 thousand year old art form can still hang in a five star hotel, which shows that the art can merge with any time period. Hence, one can say that the traditional folk art forms will not have an end if it keeps having a helping hand to pull it out, whenever it starts fading.

But the helping hand always can't be the same. It has become very monotonous for the consumers as they keep looking at these art forms on the same pace and plane. There has to be a takeoff somewhere. Otherwise, what helped art itself will pull it to down. Now it's time for a change to occur. Though people are buying what is upcoming as fashion, they are now very much looking forward for a difference in our ethnicity. Not very easy to bring a difference in our ethnicity, but the time has already come and thoughts of it have started to pounce into the consumer's heads.

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